

REMARKS

The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated December 4, 2003. Claims 1 to 30 are in the application, of which Claims 1, 10, 16, and 25 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 15 were provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting over Claims 1 to 15 of copending Application No. 10/136,897 which is a continuation-in-part of the instant application. However, the Examiner also provisionally rejected Claims 1 to 15 of Application No. 10/136,897 over claims 1 to 15 of the instant application in an Office action dated December 4, 2003. Applicants respectfully submit that provisionally rejecting a first application over a second application, and then provisionally rejecting the second application over the first application is improper and request that the provisional rejection in the instant application be withdrawn.

New claims 16 to 30 have been added as suggested by the Examiner in the Office action of December 4, 2003 for copending Application No. 10/136,897. In the Office action of December 4, 2003, the Examiner noted that "there is no apparent reason why applicant would be prevented from presenting claims corresponding to those of the instant application in the other copending application." Therefore, Applicants are now submitting claims 16 to 30 in the instant application which correspond to claims 1 to 15 in copending Application No. 10/136,897.

Claims 1 to 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, independent claims 1 and 10

included two positive recitations of “a voucher.” Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 10 such that only one positive recitation of a voucher remains in each independent claim. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1 to 15 were rejected under § 103(a) over WO 98/59311 (Saunders) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,110,044 (Stern). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested as neither Saunders nor Stern, either or alone or in combination, teach or suggest Applicants’ invention as described in the amended claims.

The present invention concerns verification of a voucher after printing by a gaming printer. A human readable validation character string is received by a gaming printer for printing on a voucher. The human readable validation character string is printed onto the voucher by the gaming printer. A scanned validation character string is subsequently read from the voucher using an optical recognition process as the voucher is being printed. The voucher is verified by comparing the received and scanned validation character strings. If the two validation character strings are different, the voucher may be voided by the printer controller before the voucher is finished being printed.

Referring specifically to the claims, amended Claim 1 calls for: receiving a validation character string; printing the received validation character string on the voucher by the gaming printer; scanning the voucher for a scanned validation character string; verifying the voucher by the gaming printer using the received validation character string and the scanned validation character string; and voiding the voucher by the gaming printer if voucher is not verified. This allows the gaming printer to prevent issuance of vouchers that cannot be redeemed because the voucher was improperly printed.

In contrast, Saunders discloses a cashless peripheral device connected to a gaming system. A ticket printer prints a bar code on a ticket in response to a cash-out signal from the gaming system. A ticket reader reads the amount printed on the ticket. If the printed value corresponds to the value which should have been printed, a ticket-out transport delivers the printed ticket to the player cashing out from the gaming system. Saunders does not disclose the use of validation character strings that are scanned after printing nor does Saunders disclose voiding a voucher by a gaming printer if voucher is not verified.

Stern discloses enhancing security in issuing and redeeming gaming tickets using machine-readable indicium, such as barcoding, embodied in a payout ticket from a gaming machine. When the ticket is presented for redemption, the machine-readable indicium is read automatically to provide electronic signals which are then processed electronically to determine whether the ticket is valid.

As Stern is concerned entirely with problems associated with redeeming properly printed payout tickets, Stern is silent with regard to methods for verifying a voucher during the printing process in order to prevent issuance of vouchers that cannot be redeemed because the voucher was improperly printed. While Stern does mention OCR, Stern fails to disclose any features of how OCR might be used for verification of a voucher before the voucher is issued. Specifically, Stern fails to disclose printing a validation character string on a voucher and then scanning the validation character string for verification purposes by a gaming printer. Additionally, Stern's disclosed redemption processes are described as operating entirely on information already printed on the ticket.

Stern thus assumes that the ticket being presented for redemption has been properly printed and is completely silent on preventing issuance of an improperly printed voucher.

Modifying the cashless peripheral device of Saunders in light of the disclosures of Stern does not result in a device having all of the features of Applicants' claimed gaming printer. Firstly, the combination of the disclosure of Saunders with the disclosure of Stern does not result in Applicants' claimed features of: printing a validation character string on a voucher by a gaming printer; scanning the voucher; and verifying the voucher by the gaming printer using the validation character string and a scanned validation character string. Saunders only discloses reading a cash-out amount printed onto a ticket in the form of a barcode. Adding Stern's deficient disclosure of OCR to Saunders' device only results in a device capable of reading a cash-out amount from the ticket using OCR. Secondly, neither Saunders nor Stern disclose voiding a voucher by a gaming printer if the voucher is not verified. Saunders only discloses a ticket-out transport that delivers a printed ticket to a player cashing out from a gaming system. Stern never addresses management of an improperly printed voucher at all. Therefore, the combination of Saunders with Stern does not teach or suggest all of the features of Applicants' invention as claimed in independent Claim 1.

Amended independent Claim 10 is an apparatus claim corresponding to Claim 1. Applicants submit that the foregoing discussion regarding Claim 1 applies equally to Claim 10.

New independent Claim 16 calls for: printing a validation character string and a barcode on a voucher using the received validation character string by the gaming printer; scanning the voucher for a scanned validation character string and a scanned

barcode; verifying the voucher using the scanned validation character string and the scanned barcode by the gaming printer; and voiding the voucher by the gaming printer if the voucher is not verified.

As discussed above, neither Saunders nor Stern discloses voiding of a voucher if the voucher cannot be verified. In addition, neither Saunders nor Stern disclose verifying a voucher using a scanned validation character string and a scanned barcode by the gaming printer. Therefore, the combination of Saunders with Stern does not teach or suggest all of the features of Applicants' invention as claimed in independent Claim 16.

New independent Claim 25 is an apparatus claim corresponding to Claim 16. Applicants submit that the foregoing discussion regarding Claim 16 applies equally to Claim 25.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. However, individual consideration of each dependent claim on its own merits is respectfully requested as each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention,

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 42,419

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-2200
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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